

VOICES
FROM THE CROWD,
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY, L.E.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE SALAMANDRINE," "LEGENDS
OF THE ISLES," &c.



LONDON:

WM. S. ORR AND CO., AMEN CORNER.

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PR
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Katharine Mounsey

From her Cousin

E. Anne Robson.

5/10th. mo. 1846



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TO

W. H. ASHURST, ESQ.,

AS A SLIGHT TESTIMONIAL OF PERSONAL REGARD, AND AN EXPRESSION OF CORDIAL
GRATITUDE FROM "ONE OF THE CROWD," FOR AIDS ATTEMPTED
TO THE GREAT CAUSE OF HUMAN PROGRESS,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED,

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE author of the following verses does not intend to enter, in this place, into any arguments, to prove the fitness of political themes for the purposes of the poet. Merely party themes may be unpoetical; but there are politics higher and purer than parties, which he, for one, will never allow to be beyond the scope and sympathies of Poetry. The great cause of Human Progress in intellectual elevation, virtue, and happiness, has required at every period of the world the support of earnest and thinking men. In this day it is more especially the duty of those who claim to be the teachers of the people—and if the man of letters be not a teacher of the people he has mistaken his vocation—to aid, by whatever means may be in their power, the progress of mankind from an imperfect into a higher and better civilisation. With this object, not because he has arbitrarily or for any purposes of popularity thought fit to devote himself to it, but because he could not choose but utter that which was in him, the following verses were written, and are now published. Whatever, in an artistical point of view, may be

their demerits, they were not undertaken idly. On the contrary, the author devoted his best energies to them, with a hope that they might be useful in some degree, however humble, in aiding the advancement of many great questions that are now before the public in those stages of development, when the IDEA transforms itself into the FACT, and the ASPIRATION into the REALITY. Good or bad, they were the best utterance he could find at the time, or that he can find now, and as such they are offered to the consideration of those who have faith in humanity, and who look upon poetry as something better than a pastime for the idle, or an amusement for the thoughtless.

A portion of them—about one-third—have from time to time appeared in “THE DAILY NEWS,” and two or three others have seen the light elsewhere in a fugitive shape.

The favour with which they have been received is an earnest that they have not been written altogether in vain. Those now published for the first time are imbued with the same principles. To those correspondents, known and unknown, who from various parts of the country, and from the other side of the Atlantic, have encouraged him with their sympathy and approval, the author can but say how great a reward they have bestowed, and what an incentive to deserve it better in future efforts they have afforded him.

JUNE 18th, 1846.

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VOICES FROM THE CROWD.

CLEAR THE WAY.

MEN of thought ! be up, and stirring

Night and day :

Sow the seed—withdraw the curtain—

CLEAR THE WAY !

Men of action, aid and cheer them,

As ye may !

There 's a fount about to stream,

There 's a light about to beam,

There 's a warmth about to glow,

There 's a flower about to blow ;

There 's a midnight blackness changing

Into gray ;

Men of thought, and men of action,

CLEAR THE WAY !

Once the welcome light has broken,
Who shall say,
What the unimagined glories
Of the day ?
What the evil that shall perish
In its ray ?

Aid the dawning, tongue and pen ;
Aid it, hopes of honest men ;
Aid it, paper—aid it, type—
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play.

Men of thought and men of action,
CLEAR THE WAY !

Lo ! a cloud 's about to vanish
From the day ;
And a brazen wrong to crumble
Into clay.

Lo ! the right 's about to conquer.
CLEAR THE WAY !

With that right shall many more
Enter smiling at the door ;
With the giant wrong shall fall
Many others, great and small,
That for ages long have held us
For their prey ;
Men of thought, and men of action,
CLEAR THE WAY !

THE WANTS OF THE PEOPLE.

WHAT do we want ? Our daily bread ;
 Leave to earn it by our skill :
Leave to labour freely for it,
 Leave to buy it where we will ;
For 'tis hard upon the many,
 Hard—unpitied by the few,
To starve and die for want of work,
 Or live, half-starved, with work to do.

What do we want ? Our daily bread ;
 Fair reward for labour done ;
Daily bread for wives and children ;
 All our wants are merged in one.
When the fierce fiend Hunger grips us,
 Evil fancies clog our brains,
Vengeance settles on our hearts,
 And Frenzy gallops through our veins.

What do we want ? Our daily bread—
Sole release from thoughts so dire :
To rise at morn with cheerful faces,
And sit at evening round the fire ;
To teach our babes the words of blessing,
Instead of curses, deep though mute ;
And tell them England is a land
Where man is happier than a brute.

What do we want ? Our daily bread :
Give us that ; all else will come ;
Self-respect and self-denial,
And the happiness of home ;
Kindly feelings, Education,
Liberty for act and thought ;
And surety that, whate'er befall,
Our children shall be fed and taught.

What do we want ? Our daily bread ;
Give us *that* for willing toil :
Make us sharers in the plenty
God has shower'd upon the soil ;
And we 'll nurse our better nature
With bold hearts, and judgment strong,
To do as much as men can do,
To keep the world from going wrong.

What do we want ? Our daily bread,
And trade untrammell'd as the wind ;
And from our ranks shall spirits start,
To aid the progress of mankind.
Sages, poets, mechanicians ;
Mighty thinkers shall arise,
To take their share of loftier work,
And teach, exalt, and civilise.

What do we want ? Our daily bread :—
Grant it :—make our efforts free ;
Let us work and let us prosper ;
You shall prosper more than we ;
And the humblest homes of England
Shall, in proper time, give birth
To better men than we have been,
To live upon a better earth.

THE THREE PREACHERS.

THERE are three preachers, ever preaching,
Each with eloquence and power ;
One is old, with locks of white,
Skinny as an anchorite ;
And he preaches every hour
With a shrill fanatic voice,
And a Bigot's fiery scorn :—
“ Backwards ! ye presumptuous nations ;
Man to misery is born !
Born to drudge, and sweat, and suffer—
Born to labour, and to pray ;
Backwards, ye presumptuous nations—
Back !—be humble, and obey ! ”

The second is a milder preacher ;
Soft he talks as if he sung ;
Sleek and slothful is his look,
And his words, as from a book,
Issue glibly from his tongue.

With an air of self-content,
High he lifts his fair white hands :—
“ Stand ye still, ye restless nations ;
And be happy, all ye lands !
Earth was made by God our Father,
And to meddle is to mar ;
Change is rash, and ever was so :
We are happy as we are.”

Mightier is the younger preacher ;
Genius flashes from his eyes :
And the crowds who hear his voice,
Give him, while their souls rejoice,
Throbbing bosoms for replies.
Awed they listen, yet elated,
While his stirring accents fall ;—
“ Forward ! ye deluded nations,
Progress is the rule of all :—
Man was made for healthful effort ;
Tyranny has crush'd him long ;
He shall march from good to better,
And do battle with the wrong.

“ Standing still is childish folly,
Going backward is a crime :—
None should patiently endure
Any ill that he can cure ;
Onward ! keep the march of Time.

Onward, while a wrong remains
To be conquer'd by the right ;
While Oppression lifts a finger
To affront us by his might :
While an error clouds the reason—
Or a sorrow gnaws the heart—
Or a slave awaits his freedom,
Action is the wise man's part.

“Lo ! the world is rich in blessings—
Earth and Ocean, flame and wind,
Have unnumber'd secrets still,
To be ransack'd when you will,
For the service of mankind ;
Science is a child as yet,
And her power and scope shall grow,
And her triumphs in the future
Shall diminish toil and woe,
Shall extend the bounds of pleasure
With an ever-widening ken,
And of woods and wildernesses
Make the homes of happy men.

“Onward !—there are ills to conquer,
Ills that on yourselves you've brought,
Tyranny is swoll'n with Pride.
Bigotry is deified,
Error intertwined with Thought.

Vice and Misery ramp and crawl,
Root them out, their day has pass'd :—
Goodness is alone immortal ;
Evil was not made to last !
Onward, and all Earth shall aid us—
Ere our peaceful flag be furl'd."—
—And the preaching of this preacher,
Stirs the pulses of the world.

OLD OPINIONS.

ONCE we thought that Power Eternal
Had decreed the woes of man ;
That the human heart was wicked,
Since its pulses first began ;—
That the earth was but a prison,
Dark and joyless at the best,
And that men were born for evil,
And imbibed it from the breast ;
That 'twas vain to think of urging
Any earthly progress on.
*Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !*

Once we thought all human sorrows
Were predestined to endure ;
That, as laws had never made them,
Laws were impotent to cure ;

That the few were born superior,
 Though the many might rebel ;
 They to sit at Nature's table,
 We to pick the crumbs that fell ;—
 They to live upon the fatness—
 We the starvelings, lank and wan.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought that Kings were holy,
 Doing wrong by right divine ;
 That the Church was Lord of Conscience,
 Arbiter of Mine and Thine.
 That whatever priests commanded
 No one could reject and live ;
 And that all who differ'd from them
 It was error to forgive :—
 Right to send to stake or halter
 With eternal malison.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought that sacred Freedom
 Was a cursed and tainted thing ;
 Foe of Peace, and Law, and Virtue ;
 Foe of Magistrate and King ;—

That all vile and rampant passion
Ever follow'd in her path ;
Lust and Plunder, War and Rapine,
Tears, and Anarchy, and Wrath.
That the angel was a cruel,
Haughty, blood-stain'd Amazon.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought that Education
Was a luxury for the few ;
That to give it to the many
Was to give it scope undue.
That 'twas foolish to imagine
It could be as free as air :
Common as the glorious sunshine
To the child of want and care :—
That the poor man educated,
Quarrell'd with his toil anon ;—
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought it right to foster
Local jealousies and pride ;—
Right to hate another nation
Parted from us by a tide :—

Right to go to war for glory,
 Or extension of domain :—
 Right, through fear of foreign rivals,
 To refuse the needful grain ;
 Right to bar it out till Famine
 Drew the bolt with fingers wan :
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Old opinions, rags and tatters ;
 Ye are worn ;—ah, quite threadbare ;
 We must cast you off for ever ;—
 We are wiser than we were :
 Never fitting, always cramping,
 Letting in the wind and sleet,
 Chilling us with rheums and agues,
 Or inflaming us with heat :—
 We have found a mental raiment
 Purer, whiter to put on.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

DAILY WORK.

Who lags for dread of daily work,
And his appointed task would shirk,
Commits a folly and a crime :
 A soulless slave—
 A paltry knave—
A clog upon the wheels of Time.
With work to do, and store of health,
The man's unworthy to be free,
 Who will not give,
 That he may live,
His daily toil for daily fee.

No ! Let us work ! We only ask
Reward proportioned to our task :—
 We have no quarrel with the great ;
 No feud with rank—
 With mill or bank—
No envy of a lord's estate.

If we can earn sufficient store
To satisfy our daily need ;
And can retain,
For age and pain,
A fraction, we are rich indeed.

No dread of toil have we or ours ;
We know our worth, and weigh our powers ;
The more we work the more we win :
Success to Trade !
Success to Spade !
And to the Corn that 's coming in !
And joy to him, who o'er his task
Remembers toil is Nature's plan ;
Who, working, thinks—
And never sinks
His independence as a man.

Who only asks for humblest wealth,
Enough for competence and health ;
And leisure, when his work is done,
To read his book,
By chimney nook,
Or stroll at setting of the sun.
Who toils as every man should toil
For fair reward, erect and free :
These are the men—
The best of men—
These are the men we mean to be !

AN EMIGRANT'S BLESSING.

FAREWELL, England ! blessings on thee,
Stern and niggard as thou art ;
Harshly, Mother, thou hast used me,
And my bread thou hast refused me ;
But 'tis agony to part.
'Twill pass over ; for I would not
Bear again what I could tell ;—
Half the ills that I have suffer'd :
Though I loved thee twice as well.
So—my blessings on thee, England,
And a long and last farewell.

Other regions will provide me
Independence for my age ;
Recompense for hard exertion—
For my children the reversion
Of a goodly heritage.
England—*this* thou couldst not give me ;

England, pamperer of squires,
Landlord-ridden, pride encumber'd,
Quencher of the poor man's fires ;—
But, farewell ! My blessing on thee ;
Thou art country of my sires.

Though I love, I 'm glad to fly thee ;
Who would live in hopeless toil,
Evil-steep'd, and ill-exampled,
Press'd and jostled, crushed and trampled,
Interloper on the soil ?—

If there were *one* other country
Where an honest man might go :
Winning corn-fields from the forest—
All his own, too—blow by blow ?
Farewell, England—I regret thee,
But my tears refuse to flow.

Haply o'er the southern ocean
I shall do my part, to rear
A new nation, Saxon-blooded,
Which with plenty crowned and studded,
To its happy children dear,
Shall eclipse thy fame, oh England ;
Taught and warned alike by thee ;—
Mightier with unshackled commerce,
Mightier in her men more free,
Mightier in her virgin vigour,
And her just equality.

But farewell. My blessing on thee !

Never, till my latest day,

Shall my memory cease to ponder

On thy fate, where'er I wander ;—

Never shall I cease to pray

That thy poor may yet be happy ;

That thy rich their pride may quell ;

That thou may'st in peaceful progress

All thy misery dispel ;—

Queen of nations : once their model—

God be with thee ! Fare-thee-well !

THE WATCHER ON THE TOWER.

"WHAT dost thou see, lone watcher on the tower?
Is the day breaking? comes the wished-for hour?
Tell us the signs, and stretch abroad thy hand,
If the bright morning dawns upon the land."

"The stars are clear above me, scarcely one
Has dimmed its rays in reverence to the sun;
But yet I see on the horizon's verge,
Some fair, faint streaks, as if the light would surge."

"Look forth again, oh, watcher on the tower—
The people wake, and languish for the hour;
Long have they dwelt in darkness, and they pine
For the full daylight that they know must shine."

"I see not well—the morn is cloudy still;
There is a radiance on the distant hill.
Even as I watch the glory seems to grow
But the stars blink, and the night breezes blow."

“ And is that all, oh, watcher on the tower ?
Look forth again ; it must be near the hour.
Dost thou not see the snowy mountain copes,
And the green woods beneath them on the slopes ? ”

“ A mist envelops them ; I cannot trace
Their outline ; but the day comes on apace.
The clouds roll up in gold and amber flakes,
And all the stars grow dim. The morning breaks.”

“ We thank thee, lonely watcher on the tower ;
But look again ; and tell us, hour by hour,
All thou beholdest ; many of us die
Ere the day comes ; oh, give them a reply.”

“ I see the hill-tops now ; and Chanticleer
Crows his prophetic carol on mine ear ;
I see the distant woods and fields of corn,
And ocean gleaming in the light of morn.”

“ Again—again—oh, watcher on the tower—
We thirst for daylight, and we bide the hour,
Patient, but longing. Tell us, shall it be
A bright, calm, glorious daylight for the free ? ”

“ I hope, but cannot tell. I hear a song,
Vivid as day itself ; and clear and strong ;
As of a lark—young prophet of the noon—
Pouring in sunlight his seraphic tune.”

“What doth he say—oh, watcher on the tower ?
Is he a prophet ? Doth the dawning hour
Inspire his music ? *Is* his chant sublime
With the full glories of the Coming Time ?”

“He prophesies ;—his heart is full ;—his lay
Tells of the brightness of a peaceful day—
A day not cloudless, nor devoid of storm,
But sunny for the most, and clear and warm.”

“We thank thee, watcher on the lonely tower,
For all thou tellest. Sings he of an hour
When Error shall decay, and Truth grow strong,
And Right shall rule supreme and vanquish Wrong ?”

“He sings of brotherhood, and joy, and peace,
Of days when jealousies and hate shall cease :
When war shall die, and man’s progressive mind
Soar as unfettered as its God designed.”

“Well done ! thou watcher on the lonely tower !
Is the day breaking ? dawns the happy hour ?
We pine to see it :—tell us, yet again,
If the broad daylight breaks upon the *plain* ?”

“It breaks—it comes—the misty shadows fly :—
A rosy radiance gleams upon the sky ;
The mountain tops reflect it calm and clear ;
The plain is yet in shade ; but day is near.”

“WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.”

THERE 's a good time coming, boys,

A good time coming :

We may not live to see the day,

But earth shall glisten in the ray

Of the good time coming.

Cannon balls may aid the truth,

But thought 's a weapon stronger ;

We 'll win our battle by its aid ;—

Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,

A good time coming :

The pen shall supersede the sword,

And Right, not Might, shall be the lord,

In the good time coming.

Worth, not Birth, shall rule mankind,

And be acknowledged stronger ;

The proper impulse has been given ;—

Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
War in all men's eyes shall be
A monster of iniquity,
In the good time coming.
Nations shall not quarrel then,
To prove which is the stronger ;
Nor slaughter men for glory's sake ;—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
Hateful rivalries of creed
Shall not make their martyrs bleed
In the good time coming.
Religion shall be shorn of pride,
And flourish all the stronger ;
And Charity shall trim her lamp ;—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
And a poor man's family
Shall not be his misery,
In the good time coming.
Every child shall be a help,
To make his right arm stronger ;
The happier he, the more he has ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
Little children shall not toil
Under, or above, the soil,
In the good time coming.
But shall play in healthful fields,
Till limbs and mind grow stronger ;
And every one shall read and write ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
The people shall be temperate,
And shall love instead of hate,
In the good time coming.
They shall use, and not abuse,
And make all virtue stronger.
The reformation has begun ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
Let us aid it all we can,
Every woman, every man,
The good time coming.
Smallest helps, if rightly given,
Make the impulse stronger ;
'Twill be strong enough one day ;—
Wait a little longer.

THE DAYS THAT ARE GONE.

Who is it that mourns for the days that are gone,
When a noble could do as he liked with his own ?
When his serfs, with their burdens well filled on their backs,
Never dared to complain of the weight of a tax ?
When his word was a statute, his nod was a law,
And for aught but his "order" he cared not a straw ?
When each had his dungeon and racks for the poor,
And a gibbet to hang a refractory boor ?

They were days when a man with a thought in his pate,
Was a man that was born for the popular hate ;
And if 'twere a thought that was good for his kind,
The man was too vile to be left unconfined ;
The days when obedience in right or in wrong,
Was always the sermon and always the song ;
When the people, like cattle, were pounded or driven,
And to scourge them was thought a King's license from
heaven.

They were days when the sword settled questions of right,
And Falsehood was first to monopolise *Might* ;
When the fighter of battles was always adored,
And the greater the tyrant, the dearer the Lord ;
When the King, who, by myriads, could number his slain,
Was considered by far the most worthy to reign ;
When the fate of the multitude hung on his breath—
A god in his life, and a saint in his death.

They were days when the headsman was always prepared—
The block ever ready—the axe ever bared ;
When a corpse on the gibbet aye swung to and fro,
And the fire at the stake never smouldered too low,
When famine and age made a woman a witch,
To be roasted alive, or be drowned in a ditch ;
When difference of creed was the vilest of crime,
And martyrs were burned half a score at a time.

They were days when the gallows stood black in the way,
The larger the town the more plentiful they ;
When Law never dreamed it was good to relent,
Or thought it less wisdom to kill than prevent ;
When Justice herself, taking Law for her guide,
Was never appeased till a victim had died ;
And the stealer of sheep, and the slayer of men,
Were strung up together again and again.

They were days when the crowd had no freedom of speech,
And reading and writing were out of its reach ;
When ignorance, stolid and dense, was its doom,
And bigotry swathed it from cradle to tomb ;
When the few thought the many mere workers for them,
To use them, and when they had used, to condemn ;
And the many, poor fools, thought the treatment their due,
And crawled in the dust at the feet of the few.

No—the Present, though clouds o'er her countenance roll,
Has a light in her eyes, and a hope in her soul.
And *we* are too wise, like the bigots to mourn,
For the darkness of days that shall never return.
Worn out, and extinct, may their history serve
As a beacon to warn us whene'er we would swerve ;
To shun the oppression, the folly, and crime,
That blacken the page of the records of Time.

Their chivalry lightened the gloom, it is true,
And honour and loyalty dwelt with the few ;
But small was the light, and of little avail,
Compared with the blaze of our *Press* and our *Rail*.
Success to that blaze ! May it shine over all,
Till Ignorance learn with what grace she may fall,
And fly from the world with the sorrow she wrought,
And leave it to Virtue and Freedom of Thought.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH THE AMERICANS.

MARCH, 1846.

BROTHERS, why this rage and scorn ?
Why these gibes and tauntings flung ?
Were your sires not English born ?
Speak you not the English tongue ?
Think you not with English thought ?
Is not Shakspeare yours and ours ?
And the same religion taught
In our cities, and your bowers ?
Brothers, turn your thoughts to peace,
And let all this discord cease.

Why should war affright the earth ?
Were the lands you covet thus,
Richer, larger, better worth,
Wherefore should you fight with us ?
'Twould be scandal to our kind,
An opprobrium to our creed,
If through rage and malice blind,
One American should bleed ;
Or if England's meanest son
Lost his life for Oregon.

If ye so desire the land,
Bide your hour—'twill not be long—
Clear it—plant it—send a band,
Peaceful, enterprising, strong,
Who will people all the clime,—
Spreading Commerce as they go,
Free to answer in their time,
When you ask them "Yes, or no!"
But beware, for Freedom's sake—
Oh, beware, the part you take.

It would be a dastard shame—
Shame more deep than words can breathe,
If for *this* we lit the flame,
Or drew weapon from its sheath.
Deeper guilt, more heinous sin,
If the foolish quarrel grew,
And the nations, pressing in,
Ranged themselves for us or you,
And the earth was filled with hate,
Because *you* were insatiate.

Freedom's prophet, England taught—
And you learned what she instilled;
You the inspiration caught;
Be *your* prophecy fulfilled.
Show the world, who doubts the fact,
That of Freedom is not born

Rabble passion, frenzied act,
Utter recklessness and scorn,—
If so once, they need not be ;—
Wisdom dwells with Liberty.

Let the bloody flag be furl'd :
Nobler is the task we're set ;
And 'tis treason to the world
To neglect it, or forget.
SCIENCE woos us to her arms ;
New DISCOVERY waits our time ;
Young INVENTION spreads her charms ;
KNOWLEDGE beckons us to climb.
Brothers, join us in the van,
And we'll lead the march of man.

But if madly bent on strife,
And all reason speaks in vain,
Be the guilt of every life
In the unnatural contest slain
On your heads ;—and ere 'tis o'er,
Such a lesson you shall learn,
As shall sicken you of war.
Brothers, for your hand we yearn !
Let us give our thoughts to peace ;
Let this foolish discord cease.

TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

ON HIS SPEECH IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, ON THE SECOND
OF JANUARY, 1846, RECOMMENDING THE SEIZURE OF
THE OREGON TERRITORY.

QUINCY ADAMS, Quincy Adams,
English hearts are pained to view
Such a burst of foolish passion
In an ancient man like you.
Though they scorn you not, nor hate you,
Yet they pity, and deplore,
That when Age has cooled your pulses,
Wisdom has not taught you more.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Cling to right whate'er it cost ;
Plunder never pays a nation
For the honour it has lost.
You should know it—you should teach it,
That with Many as with One,
Evil gains are daily curses,
Fruits to wither in the sun.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
If from no desire of spoil,
But from honest misconception
You and yours have bred this broil,
Let a Congress of the nations,
Men of honour, firm and true,
Hear the claim and give decision
Fairly betwixt us and you.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Men will think, whate'er you say,
If, when urged to this solution,
You persist in answering, Nay,
That your Code is like the robber's,
Force, not Right, to win the prize ;
That your quarrel is not honest,
And your logic built on lies.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Trust us English. Take our word,
'Tis not fear—or debt—or weakness,
Makes us loth to draw the sword.
Though 'tis bad to lose a battle,
'Tis not perfect good to win ;
We have learned a useful lesson :
Both are bad. We'll not begin.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
We could work you fearful woe ;
But what pleasure could it give us,
Though we crushed you at a blow ?
We are elder—you are younger—
We the man, and you the boy ;
And we 'd rather clothe than fight you,
Rather cherish than destroy.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
War has lessons you should con ;
Think upon them—use your reason—
Arbitrate for Oregon.
If you *will* dispute—so be it,
We 'll be ready ere the time :
But, Old Man, to death descending,
Weigh the sorrow, weigh the crime.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Think that you have done your best,
To enkindle wrath and ruin,
Ere you sink into your rest.
Think that millions of your fellows
May have cause to curse your name ;—
Quincy Adams, take our offer,
And retract—retract for shame.

THE POETRY OF RAILWAYS.

No poetry in Railways ! foolish thought
Of a dull brain, to no fine music wrought.
By mammon dazzled, though the people prize
The gold alone, yet shall not we despise
The triumphs of our time, or fail to see
Of pregnant mind the fruitful progeny
Ushering the daylight of the world's new morn.
Look up, ye doubters, be no more forlorn !—
Smooth your rough brows, ye little wise : rejoice,
Ye who despond : and with exulting voice
Salute, ye earnest spirits of our time,
The young Improvement ripening to her prime,
Who, in the fulness of her genial youth,
Prepares the way for Liberty and Truth,
And breaks the barriers that, since earth began,
Have made mankind the enemy of man.

Lay down your rails, ye nations, near and far—
Yoke your full trains to Steam's triumphal car ;
Link town to town ; unite in iron bands
The long-estranged and oft-embattled lands.
Peace, mild-eyed Seraph—Knowledge, light divine,
Shall send their messengers by every line.

Men, joined in amity, shall wonder long
That Hate had power to lead their fathers wrong ;
Or that false Glory lured their hearts astray,
And made it virtuous and sublime to slay.

Blessings on Science ! When the earth seemed old,
When Faith grew doting, and the Reason cold,
'Twas she discovered that the world was young,
And taught a language to its lisping tongue :
'Twas she disclosed a future to its view,
And made old knowledge pale before the new.

Blessings on Science ! In her dawning hour
Faith knit her brow, alarmed for ancient power ;
Then looked again upon her face sincere,
Held out her hand, and hailed her—Sister dear ;
And Reason, free as eagle on the wind,
Swooped o'er the fallow meadows of the mind,
And, clear of vision, saw what seed would grow
On the hill slopes, or in the vales below ;
What in the sunny South or nipping Nord,
And from her talons dropped it as she soared.

Blessings on Science, and her handmaid Steam !
They make Utopia only half a dream ;
And show the fervent, of capacious souls,
Who watch the ball of Progress as it it rolls,
That all as yet completed, or begun,
Is but the dawning that precedes the sun.

THE FERMENTATION.

LONELY sitting, deeply musing,
On a still and starry night,
Full of fancies, when my glances
Turned upon those far romances
Scattered o'er the Infinite ;
On a sudden, broke upon me
Murmurs, rumours, quick and loud,
And, half-waking, I discovered
An innumerable crowd.

'Mid the uproar of their voices
Scarcely could I hear a word ;
There was rushing, there was crushing,
And a sound like music gushing,
And a roar like forests stirred
By a fierce wind passing o'er them :—
And a voice came now and then,
Louder than them all, exclaiming
“ Give us Justice ! we are men ! ”

And the longer that I listened,
More distinctly could I hear,
'Mid the poisoning of the voicing,
Sounds of sorrow and rejoicing,
Utterance of Hope and Fear ;
And a clash of disputation,
And of words at random cast—
Truths and Errors intermingling,
Of the present and the past.

Some were shouting that Oppression
Held their consciences in thrall ;
Some were crying " Men are dying,
Hunger-smit, and none supplying
Bread, the birthright of us all."
Some exclaimed that Wealth was haughty,
Harsh, and callous to the poor ;—
Others cried, the poor were vicious,
Idle, thankless, insecure.

Some, with voice of indignation,
Told the story of their wrongs,
Full of dolour—life-controller—
That for difference of colour
They were sold and scourged with thongs.
Others, pallid, weak, and shivering,
Said that laws were surely bad,
When the willing hand was idle,
And the cheeks of Toil were sad.

“ Give us freedom for the conscience !”

“ Equal rights !”—“ Unfettered Mind !”

“ Education !”—“ Compensation !”

“ Justice for a mighty nation !”

“ Progress !”—“ Peace with all mankind !”

“ Let us labour !”—“ Give us churches !”

“ Give us Corn where’er it grow !”

These, and other cries, around me

Surged incessant, loud or low.

Old opinions jarred with new ones ;

New ones jostled with the old ;

In such Babel, few were able

To distinguish truth from fable,

In the tale their neighbours told.

But one voice above all others

Sounded like the voice of ten,

Clear, sonorous, and persuasive :—

“ Give us Justice ! we are men !”

And I said, “ Oh Sovereign Reason,

Sire of Peace and Liberty !

Aid for ever their endeavour :—

Boldly let them still assever

All the rights they claim in thee.

Aid the mighty Fermentation

Till it purifies at last,

And the Future of the people

Is made brighter than the Past.”

THE POOR MAN'S SUNDAY WALK.

THE morning of our rest has come,
The sun is shining clear ;
I see it on the steeple-top :
Put on your shawl, my dear,
And let us leave the smoky town,
The dense and stagnant lane,
And take our children by the hand
To see the fields again.
I 've pined for air the live-long week ;
For the smell of new-mown hay ;
For a pleasant, quiet, country walk,
On a sunny Sabbath day.

Our parish church is cold and damp ;
I need the air and sun ;
We 'll sit together on the grass,
And see the children run.

We 'll watch them gathering buttercups,
Or cowslips in the dell,
Or listen to the cheerful sounds
Of the far-off village bell ;
And thank our God with grateful hearts,
Though in the fields we pray ;
And bless the healthful breeze of heaven,
On a sunny Sabbath day.

I'm weary of the stifling room,
Where all the week we're pent ;
Of the alley filled with wretched life,
And odours pestilent.
And long once more to see the fields,
And the grazing sheep and beeves ;
To hear the lark amid the clouds,
And the wind among the leaves ;
And all the sounds that glad the air
On green hills far away :—
The sounds that breathe of Peace and Love,
On a sunny Sabbath day.

For somehow, though they call it wrong,
In church I cannot kneel
With half the natural thankfulness
And piety I feel,
When out, on such a day as this,
I lie upon the sod,

And think that every leaf and flower
Is grateful to its God :
That I who feel the blessing more
Should thank him more than they,
That I can elevate my soul
On a sunny Sabbath day.

Put on your shawl, and let us go ;—
For one day let us think
Of something else than daily care,
Of toil, and meat, and drink :
For one day let our children sport
And feel their limbs their own ;
For one day let us quite forget
The grief that we have known :—
Let us forget that we are poor ;
And, basking in the ray,
Thank God that we can still enjoy
A sunny Sabbath day.

A CONVICT'S BLESSING.

BLESSINGS on England !—but why should *I* bless her ?

I that she tutored from bad into worse ;—

I that could never, since Reason possessed me,

Balance my faults by the weight of my purse.

She 's a very good land for the man who has money,

But Misery gives her, as I do, a curse.

What else should I give her ? One day, in my boyhood,

I plucked from a branch a fair apple, that swung

Tempting and ripe o'er the wall of an orchard,

But ere the first morsel delighted my tongue,

Was hurried to gaol, where some older offenders

Conceived it their duty to train up the young.

When I came out, is it likely that goodness

Brightened my face or made warmth in my breast ?

Blighted in name, with a mark set upon me,

And vengeance within me to trouble my rest—

I practised their lessons for want of employment,

And lived upon others, and fared on the best.

For three dreary months I was doomed to the treadmill,
For killing a pheasant one midsummer night ;
For six I was shut from all sight of my fellows,
For catching a hare when my pocket was light ;
And now I am banished for shooting a keeper—
A murder or manslaughter—done in a fight.

Blessings on England ! Perhaps—when she alters,
And ceases to worship a lord, as a lord ;
When the soul of a man is worth more than a partridge,
And labour may see healthy cheeks at its board ;
When her laws are alike for her poor and her wealthy ;
And Justice is not quite so fond of her sword.

Meantime I can give her but that which is in me,
That which will cling to my heart evermore ;
That which so many, heart-broken have given her,
To rankle and fester, life-deep at her core ;
The curse which she gave me instead of a blessing—
The curse which she brands me with, leaving her shore.

Had she but taught me in days of my childhood,
The folly of youth had not ripened to crime ;
Had she but given me a chance of amendment,
I might have been useful and happy in time ;
Had she not treated the boy like a felon,
The man might have been a good man ere his prime.

But *this* was denied me. So, blessings on England !

Blessings—ay, give them that name if ye will ;—
Such blessings as mine ever turn into curses—

I cannot give good for a life-time of ill.

Blessings on England ! the word may be pleasant ;

But the Curse and the Vengeance shall follow her still.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

WE make no boast of Waterloo ;
Its name excites no pride in us ;
We have no hatred of the French,
No scorn of Yankee or of Russ.
The GLORY that our fathers gained
In bloody warfare years ago,
And which they talk of o'er their cups,
Gives us no joy to think upon.

In truth we rather love the French,
And think our fathers did them wrong ;
And sometimes blush when in the streets,
Quite out of date, an ancient song—
Ghost of a prejudice—comes back,
And tells us how, in days gone out,
The best of Englishmen was he,
Who put a dozen French to rout.

We have no foolish thoughts like these,
Of France, or any other land ;
And jealousies so poor and mean,
We're somewhat slow to understand.

We'd rather with our friends, the French,
Encourage kindness of thought,
Than gain a score of Waterloos,
Or any battle ever fought.

And in this year of "forty-six,"
We rising men, in life's young prime,
Are men who think the French have done
The world good service in their time.
And for their sakes, and for our own,
And Freedom's sake o'er all the earth,
We'd rather let old feuds expire,
And cling to something better worth.

If thought of battles gained by us
Disturb or gall them, let it rest ;—
Napoleon was a man of men,
But neither wickedest nor best ;
Neither a demon nor a god ;
And if they *will* adore a king,
The honest man who rules them now
Deserves a little worshipping.

To be at strife, however just,
Has no attraction to our mind :
And as for nations fond of war,
We think them pests of humankind.

Still—if there *must* be rivalry
Betwixt us and the French ;—why then
Let earth look on us, while we show
Which of the two are better men.

We'll try the rivalry of Arts,
Of Science, Learning, Freedom, Fame—
We'll try who first shall light the world
With Charity's divinest flame—
Who best shall elevate the poor,
And teach the wealthy to be true :
We want no rivalry of arms,
We want no boasts of Waterloo.

THE DREAM OF THE REVELLER.

AS SUNG BY MR. H. RUSSELL.

AROUND the board the guests were met, the lights above
them beaming,

And in their cups, replenish'd oft, the ruddy wine was
streaming ;

Their cheeks were flushed, their eyes were bright, their
hearts with pleasure bounded,

The song was sung, the toast was given, and loud the revel
sounded.

I drained a goblet with the rest, and cried, " Away with
sorrow !

Let us be happy for to-day ; what care we for to-morrow ? "

But as I spoke, my sight grew dim, and slumber deep came
o'er me,

And, ' mid the whirl of mingling tongues, this vision passed
before me.

Methought I saw a demon rise : he held a mighty bicker,
Whose burnish'd sides ran brimming o'er with floods of
burning liquor,

Around him press'd a clamorous crowd, to taste this liquor,
greedy,

But chiefly came the poor and sad, the suffering and the
needy ;

All those oppress'd by grief or debt, the dissolute, the lazy,
Blar-eyed old men and reckless youths, and palsied women
crazy ;

" Give, give !" they cried, " Give, give us drink, to drown
all thought of sorrow ;

If we are happy for to-day, we care not for to-morrow !"

The *first* drop warmed their shivering skins, and drove away
their sadness ;

The *second* lit their sunken eyes, and filled their souls with
gladness ;

The *third* drop made them shout and roar, and play each
furious antic ;

The *fourth* drop boiled their very blood ; and the *fifth* drop
drove them frantic :—

" Drink !" said the Demon, " Drink your fill ! drink of these
waters mellow !

They 'll make your eye-balls sear and dull, and turn your
white skins yellow ;

They 'll fill your homes with care and grief, and clothe your
backs with tatters ;

They 'll fill your hearts with evil thoughts : but never mind !
—what matters ?

“ Though virtue sink, and reason fail, and social ties dis sever,
I’ll be your friend in hour of need, and find you homes for
ever ;

For I have built three mansions high, three strong and goodly
houses,

To lodge at last each jolly soul, who all his life carouses.—

The *first* it is a spacious house, to all but sots appalling,

Where, by the parish bounty fed, vile, in the sunshine
crawling,

The worn-out drunkard ends his days, and eats the dole of
others,

A plague and burthen to himself, an eye-sore to his
brothers.

“ The *second* is a larger house, rank, fetid, and unholy ;

Where, smitten by diseases foul and hopeless melancholy,

The victims of potations deep pine on a couch of sadness,

Some calling Death to end their pain, and others wrought to
madness :

The *third* and last is black and high, the abode of guilt and
anguish,

And full of dungeons deep and fast, where death-doomed
felons languish ;

So drain the cup, and drain again ! One of my goodly
houses,

Shall lodge at last each jolly soul who to the dregs
carouses ! ”

But well he knew—that Demon old—how vain was all his
preaching,
The ragged crew that round him flocked were heedless of
his teaching;
Even as they heard his fearful words, they cried, with shouts
of laughter,—
“Out on the fool who mars to-day with thought of an
hereafter!
We care not for thy houses three; we live but for the
present;
And merry will we make it yet, and quaff our bumpers
pleasant.”
Loud laughed the fiend to hear them speak, and lifting high
his bicker,
“Body and soul are mine!” said he, “I’ll have them *both*
for liquor.”

THE POET AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

A DIALOGUE.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

PRITHEE, Poet, why this spinning,
Spinning verses all the day ?
Vain and idle thy vocation,—
Thou art useless to the nation,
In thy labour and thy play.

Little doth the world esteem thee,
And it takes thee at thy worth ;
Loftiest rhyme that e'er was fashioned,
Sounding, gorgeous, or impassioned,
Is a drug upon the earth.

Go—and be a cotton-spinner ;
Put thy hand upon the spade ;
Weave a basket out of willow ;
Dig the mine, or sail the billow ;
Anything but such a trade.

THE POET.

Why thy scorn, O man of logic ?
Speak of that within thy ken ;
I despise thee not ;—thy labours,
If they make us better neighbours,
Are not valueless to men.

Highly all the world esteems thee,
And a poet may declare,
That the wise should place reliance
On the efforts of thy science
To diminish human care.

Bring thy hidden truth to daylight,
And I'll ne'er complain of thee ;
Dull thou 'rt called—and dullness cumbers,
Yet there 's Wisdom in *thy* numbers ;
Leave *my* numbers unto me.

Each of us fulfils a mission,
And, though scorned, I'll cling to mine,
With a passion ever growing
In my heart, to overflowing ;—
Cling thou with as much to thine.

Thou 'rt a preacher ;—*I*'m a prophet.
Thou discoursest to thy time ;
I discourse to generations ;—
And the thoughts of unborn nations
Shall be fashioned by my rhyme.

Thou, to dubious politicians
Staid and passionless and slow,
Givest pros and cons with candour,
Bland and patient, growing blander
As thy trim deductions flow.

I send forth electric flashes
To the bosom of the crowd ;
Rule its pulses, cheer its sadness,
Make it throb, and pant with gladness,
Till it answers me aloud.

Not for me to linger idly,
Gathering garlands by the way ;
Singing but of flowers and sunsets,
Lover's vows, or knightly onsets,
Or of ladies fair as May.—

No, the poet knows his mission,
Nature's lyre is all his own ;
He can sweep its strings prophetic,
Till the nations sympathetic,
Gather breathless to its tone.

For he knows the PEOPLE listen
When a mighty spirit speaks,
And that none can stir them duly,
But the man that loves them truly,
And from *them* his impulse seeks.

What they feel, but cannot utter ;
What they hope for, day and night ;—
These the words by which he fires them,
Prompts them, leads them, and inspires them
To do battle for the right.



These the words by which the many
Cope for justice with the few ;—
These their watch-words, when oppression
Would resist the small concession
But a fraction of their due.

These the poet, music-hearted,
Blazons to the listening land,
And for these all lands shall prize him,
Though the foolish may despise him,
Or the wise misunderstand.

Go thy way, then, man of logic,
In *thy* fashion, speak *thy* truth ;—
Thou hast fixed, and I have chosen ;—
Thou shalt speak to blood that 's frozen,
I to vigour and to youth.

Haply we shall both be useful,
And, perchance, more useful thou,
If their full degree of merit
Unto other moods of spirit
Thou wilt cheerfully allow.



As for me, I fear no scorning,
And shall speak with earnest mind
What is in me ;—self-rewarded
If I aid, though unregarded,
The advancement of my kind.



A REVERIE IN THE GRASS.

THERE let me rest, amid the bearded grass
Sprinkled with buttercups ; and idly pass
One hour of sunshine on the green hill slope :
Watching the ridged clouds, that o'er the cope
Of visible heaven sail quietly along ;
Listening the wind, or rustling leaves, or song
Of blackbird, or sweet ringdove in the copse
Of pines and sycamores, whose dark green tops
Form a clear outline right against the blue :—
Here let me lie and dream : losing from view
All vexed and worldly things ; and for one hour
Living such life as green leaf in a bower
Might live ; breathing the calm pure air,
Heedless of hope, or fear, or joy, or care.

Oh, it is pleasant in this summer time
To be alone, to meditate and rhyme :
To hear the bee plying his busy trade,
Or grasshopper alert in sun and shade,
With bright large eyes and ample forehead bald,
Clad in cuirass and cuishes emerald.



Here let me rest, and for a little space
Shut out the world from my abiding place ;
Seeing around me nought but grass and bent,
Nothing above me but the firmament ;
For such my pleasure, that in solitude
Over my seething fancies I may brood,
Encrucibled and moulded as I list,
And I, expectant as an alchymist.

Oh, beautiful green grass ! Earth's covering fair !
What shall be sung of thee, nor bright, nor rare,
Nor highly thought of ? Long green grass that waves
By the wayside—over the ancient graves—
Or shoulders of the mountain looming high—
Or skulls of rocks—bald in their majesty,
Except for thee, that in the crevices
Liv'st on the nurture of the sun and breeze ;—
Adorner of the nude rude breast of hills ;
Mantle of meadows ; fringe of gushing rills ;
Humblest of all the humble :—Thou shalt be,
If to none else, exalted unto me,
And for a time a type of Joy on Earth—
Joy unobtrusive, of perennial birth,
Common as light and air, and warmth and rain,
And all the daily blessings that in vain
Woo us to gratitude : the earliest born
Of all the juicy verdures that adorn
The fruitful bosom of the kindly soil,
Pleasant to eyes that ache and limbs that toil.

Lo ! as I muse, I see the bristling spears
Of thy seed-bearing stalks, which some, thy peers,
Lift o'er their fellows—nodding to and fro
Their lofty foreheads as the wild winds blow.
And think thy swarming multitudes a host
Drawn up embattled on their native coast
And officered for war :—the spearmen free
Raising their weapons, and the martial bee
Blowing his clarion—while some poppy tall
Displays the blood-red banner over all.

Pleased with the thought, I nurse it for awhile;
And then dismiss it with a faint half smile :
And next I fancy thee a multitude,
Moved by one breath—obedient to the mood
Of one strong thinker—the resistless wind,
That passing o'er thee bends thee to its mind.
See how thy blades, in myriads as they grow,
Turn ever eastward as the west winds blow ;
Just as a human crowd is swayed and bent
By some great preacher, madly eloquent,
Who moves them at his will, and with a breath
Gives them their bias both in life and death.
Or by some wondrous actor, when he draws
All eyes and hearts, amid a hushed applause
Not to be uttered lest delight be marred ;
Or, greater still, by hymn of prophet-bard,
Who moulds the lazy present by his rhyme,
And sings the glories of the coming time.

And ye are happy, green leaves every one.
Spread in your countless thousands to the sun.
Unlike mankind, no solitary blade
Of all your verdure ever disobeyed
The law of Nature : every stalk that lifts
Its head above the mould enjoys the gifts
Of liberal heaven—the rain, the dew, the light—
And points, though humbly, to the Infinite ;
And every leaf, a populous world, maintains
Invisible nations on its wide-stretched plains.
So great is littleness ! the mind at fault,
Between the peopled leaf and starry vault,
Doubts which is grandest, and with holy awe
Adores the God who made them, and whose law
Upholds them in Eternity or Time—
Greatest and least, ineffably sublime.

TO A FRIEND AFRAID OF CRITICS.

AFRAID of critics ! an unworthy fear :
Great minds must learn their greatness and be bold.
Walk on thy way ; bring forth thine own true thought ;
Love thy high calling only for itself,
And find in working recompense for work,
And Envy's shaft shall whiz at thee in vain.
Despise not censure. Weigh if it be just,
And if it be—amend, whate'er the thought
Of him who cast it. Take the wise man's praise
And love thyself the more that thou couldst earn
Meed so exalted ; but the blame of fools
Let it blow over like an idle whiff
Of poisonous tobacco in the streets,
Invasive of thy unoffending nose.
Their praise no better, only more perfumed.

The Critics—let me paint them as they are.
Some few I know, and love them from my soul ;
Polished, acute, deep read ; of inborn taste
Cultured into a virtue ; full of pith

And kindly vigour ; having won their spurs
In the great rivalry of friendly mind,
And generous to others, though unknown,
Who would, having a thought, let all men know
The new discovery. But these are rare ;
And if thou find one, take him to thy heart,
And think his unbought praise both palm and crown,
A thing worth living for, were nought beside.

If to be famous be thy sole intent,
And greatness be a mark beyond thy reach,
Manage the critics, and thou 'lt win the game ;
But fear them not, if thou art true thyself,
And look for fame, *now*, if the wise approve,
Or, from a wiser jury yet unborn.
The Poetaster may be harmed enough,
But Criticasters cannot crush a Bard.

One, if thou'rt great, will cite from thy new book
The tamest passage : something that thy soul
Revolts at, now the inspiration 's o'er,
And would give all thou hast to blot from print
And sink into oblivion ; and will vaunt
The thing as beautiful—transcendant—rare—
The best thing thou hast done. Another friend,
With finer sense, will praise thy greatest thought,
Yet cavil at it ; putting in his "*but*s"
And "*yets*," and little obvious hints

That though 'tis good, the critic could have made
A work superior in its every part.
Another, in a pert and savage mood,
Without a reason, will condemn thee quite,
And strive to quench thee in a paragraph.
Another, with dishonest waggery,
Will twist, misquote, and utterly pervert
Thy thought and words ; and hug himself meanwhile
In the delusion, pleasant to his soul,
That thou art crushed, and he a gentleman.

Another, with a specious fair pretence,
Immaculately wise, will skim thy book,
And, self-sufficient, from his desk look down
With undisguised contempt on thee and thine ;
And sneer and snarl thee from his weekly court,
From an idea, spawn of his conceit,
That the best means to gain a great renown
For wisdom, is to sneer at all the world,
With strong denial that a good exists ;—
That all is bad, imperfect, feeble, stale,
Except this critic who outshines mankind.

Another, with a foolish zeal, will prate
Of thy great excellence ; and on thy head
Heap epithet on epithet of praise
In terms preposterous, that thou wilt blush
To be so smothered with such fulsome lies.

Another, calmer, with laudations thin
Unsavoury and weak, will make it seem
That his good nature, not thy merit, prompts
The baseless adulation of his pen.
Another with a bull-dog's bark, will bay
Foul names against thee for some fancied slight
That thou ne'er dreamed of, and will damn thy work
For spite against the worker ; while the next
Who thinks thy faith or politics a crime,
Will bray displeasure from his monthly stall,
And prove thee dunce, that disagreeest with him ;

And, last of all, some solemn sage, whose nod
Trimestrial, awes a world of little wits,
Will carefully avoid to name thy name,
Although thy words are in the mouths of men
And thy ideas in their inmost hearts
Moulding events, and fashioning thy time
To nobler efforts.—Little matters it :
Whate'er thou art, thy value will appear.
If thou art bad, no praise will buoy thee up ;
If thou art good, no censure weigh thee down,
Nor silence nor neglect prevent thy fame.
So fear not thou the critics ! Speak thy thought ;
And, if thou 'rt worthy, in the people's love
Thy name shall live, while lasts thy mother tongue.

A WINTER-NIGHT'S PHANTASMAGORIA.

SAID I to my Fancy, " Go, wandering sprite,
And sail on the winds of this chill winter night ;
The earth is before thee, thy pinions are free,
And wild as thou art there is earnest in Thee !—
Go forth ! and returning with Truth for thy guide
Recount me the ills thou hast seen on thy ride ;
The pain, the misfortune, the sorrow, the wrong,
The woes of the weak, and the guilt of the strong ;
That Hope may take courage through all that 's endured,
And whisper to Reason how much may be cured."

And Fancy untrammell'd went forth on her way
To an army encamped, and awaiting the day :—
The soldier was dreaming of home's distant shore,
And the friends that, alas ! he might visit no more,
Of the little ones lisping that came to his call,
And the wife of his bosom—oh, dearer than all !
But short was his sleep : ere the morn's latest star
Was dimmed in the light of the dawning afar,
He heard the alarum beat loud on the drum,
And a low sudden cry that the foeman had come.

They armed at the summons, each man at his post ;
The watchword of battle flew fast through the host ;
The trumpets loud sounded ; the war-horses neighed
As the squadrons came rushing with banners displayed ;
And, long ere the noon, on that moist battle plain
The green sod was red with the blood of the slain ;
And the glory, that dazzled all eyes like the sun,
Was bought by the many, and given to one ;
And Fancy was pained for those multitudes blind,
And wept for the folly and sin of mankind :—
But Reason exclaimed, “ Be of cheer, stricken soul,
Though strife be the race, and dominion the goal,
Not ever shall nations be victims of war,
Not ever shall men be the fools that they are.”

Next, borne on the winds that were drifting the snow,
Went Fancy careering, and dreaming of woe ;
And she came to a mansion, scant-window'd, high-wall'd,
Where a thin-visaged cold-hearted LAW sat install'd—
The Palace of Paupery, naked and bare,
And she saw a poor vagrant unhoused in the air ;
He was sickly and feeble, and famished, and old,
And his thin tattered garments flapped loose in the cold,
And, timidly knocking, he asked with a sigh
For a pallet of straw to lie down on and die :—
“ We are full,” said a voice ; “ we have room for no more !
Thou 'rt not of our parish ; begone from the door !”
And the pauper, scarce able to crawl from the gate,
Lay down with a groan and prepared for his fate.

But close within sight was a lordly abode—
Its windows, lit up, cast a gleam o'er the road ;
He heard the loud laughter, the shouts and the din
As the wine-cups were drained and replenished within,
The bacchanal chants that the revellers sung,
The soft sadder lays of the loving and young,
And, high over all, the inspiriting strain
That called up the dancers again and again ;
And Fancy beheld his vain efforts to rise
As he turned to the mansion his pitiful eyes,
And heard his last moan as despairing of aid
He gathered his tatters around him and prayed —
His last feeble sigh as he died by the door,
In sight of the aid that he could not implore ;
And she wept for the cruelty wrought upon plan,
And the heart-petrification of overfed man :—
But Hope, still undaunted, exclaimed, " Be of cheer :
Not ever shall Wealth make humanity sear ;
Not ever shall Famine slay under the sun,
Where all might have plenty if justice were done ;
Nor Law give the pauper, defrauding its trust,
A coffin of planks with more joy than a crust."



Again Fancy travelled away on the blast,
Till she came to a city imperial and vast,
With its domes and its temples and spires rising high,
Dim seen through the darkness that shrouded the sky.
The starlight looked down on its myriad abodes,
And the long line of lamps glittered far on the roads

Like the crown of the city embossed and impearled,
As she sat on her throne to give laws to the world :
And there, at a corner that swarmed with a crowd
Of squalor and raggedness shouting aloud,
She entered a tenement flaring with light,
And saw a degraded disheartening sight ;
The young and the aged, the sick and the well,
The child and the mother, with antic and yell
And laughter most horrid, and screeching, and din,
Destroying their souls and their bodies with gin ;
Imbibing the frenzy, in draught after draught,
And loving it better the more that they quaff'd ;
And one, a young creature, still fair as a dream,
Rushed out through the dark to a bridge o'er a stream—
Her eye bright with madness, her cheek pale with woe—
And paced by the parapet sadly and slow ;
Then stopped to look down on the dark-flowing tide
Where others before her heart-broken had died,
And wrung her hands wildly, and muttered the name
Of one who had robbed her of virtue and fame ;—
And sprung with a shriek to the coping of stone,
And plunged in the waters, unheeded, unknown—
One splash in the wave, and the struggle was o'er ;
And Fancy, lamenting, remained to deplore.

Morn rose o'er the the city ; the domes and the spires
Were bright in the sunshine ; the smoke of the fires
Curled upwards, dispersing in wreathlets of grey ;
Sound followed on sound ; and the tumult of day

Swelled louder and louder ; a trampling of feet
And a rumbling of chariots and cars in the street,
A clanking of hammers, a ringing of bells,
And a low stifled sound like the sea when it swells,
And thousands of noises—all, mingling like one,
Proclaimed that the million were up with the sun.
And Fancy was off again, pressing along
Through thoroughfares dense with a gathering throng—
So dense it appeared, as some festival-day
Had called forth the people to loiter and play ;
And lo, in the midst of the city she saw
That a man was about to be slain by the Law.
The huge gloomy prison stood frowning and high ;
The gallows was ready ; the hangman was by ;
The victim was praying ; the crowd, far and near,
Thronged window and balcony eager to hear,
And a sea of grim faces was surging below,
Ever roaring or jesting, or swayed to and fro
Like the boughs of a forest when tempests are strong,
And hissing impatient that time was so long
Ere the noose was prepared and the hanging began,
And Law was revenged by destroying a man.
And Fancy heart-sick turned away from the sight,
And weary of roaming, reposed from her flight :—
But Hope ever-cheerful exclaimed yet again,
“ The world shall grow better—thy flight is not vain ;
Intemperance shall not for ever destroy
The souls of the many—look up, there is Joy :—

And Law with his years, growing kindly and mild,
Shall act unto all as a sire to his child ;
And, banishing Vengeance for aye from his code,
Shall lead his poor wanderers back to the road ;
And, wiser than ever, shall make it a rule
To suffer no hangman to teach in his school ;
Be cheered then, oh Fancy, and soon thou shalt see
If Hope was a prophet in preaching to thee."





THE EARTH AND THE STARS.

SAID the Earth to the Stars, " Oh my sisters,
Fellow travellers through this dread immensity,
Send a voice to my spirit and declare,
If, serenely as ye smile on me, and fair,
Ye are dwellings for all miseries, like me ?

" Oh tell me if in you, my glorious sisters,
Rules a tyrant like the one enthronèd here ?—
If Death has ever entered in your climes,
And Suffering, and Calamity, and Crimes
Ever rob you of the children that you rear ?

" Oh tell me if in you, my myriad sisters,
The weak are ever trampled by the strong ?—
If Malice, and Intolerance, and Hate,
And Warfare, and Ambition to be great,
Ever cause the right to suffer from the wrong ?

" Oh tell me, silent sisters, are ye happy ?—
Are the multitudes that live beneath your skies,
Full of knowledge, unaccursed by such a ban
As man has ever issued against man ;
Are they happy, are they loving, are they wise ? "



Said the Stars to the Earth—"Oh mournful sister,
Rolling calmly through the calm infinity,
We have rolled for countless ages on our track,
Ever onward—pressing onward—never back ;—
There is progress both for us and for thee.

"There is neither standing still nor retrogression
In the laws of Eternal governance ;
And Death itself, which prompts thee to repine,
Is no evil unto thee nor unto thine,
But a step from good to better ; an advance.

"Thou wilt make, oh thou foolish little sister,
The full cycle of thy glory, in thy time ;
We are rolling on in ours for evermore ;—
Look not backward—see Eternity before,
And free thyself of Sorrow and of Crime.

"God who made thee, never meant thee, mournful sister,
To be filled with sin and grief eternally ;
And the children that are born upon thy breast
Shall, in fulness of their Destiny, be blest :—
There is Progress for the Stars, and for Thee."

THE YOUNG EARTH.

“The earth gives signs of age, disease, and fickleness. It yields its increase grudgingly, and demands an exorbitant fee beforehand, in toil and sweat from the husbandman. It has ill turns, or paroxysms, when it rouses the ocean into a tempest, and makes sport of navies, strewing the shore with the wrecks and carcases of men. It rocks a continent or sinks an island; shaking massive cities into countless fragments, and burying its wretched inhabitants in indiscriminate ruin; anon it writhes and groans in mortal agony, and finds relief only by disgorging its fiery bowels, burying cities and villages in burning graves. THE EARTH IS OLD AND FEEBLE, and must needs groan on until it renews its prime.”—*Miseries and Liabilities of the Present Life.*

OLD Earth? YOUNG EARTH!—though myriad years,
Since Time's primeval morn,
She may have flourished 'mid the spheres
Before a man was born.

Still young: though race succeeding race
Have trod her breast sublime,
And flourished in their pride of place
Their full allotted time,—

Then passed away, like daily things,
Nor left a trace behind
To tell how many thousand Springs
They lived before mankind.

We, who for three-score years and ten
Toil deathwards from our birth,
Deem sixty centuries of men
A ripe old age for Earth.

But all our deeds, though back we look
With yearning keen and fond,
Fill but a page ; the mighty book
Lies fathomless beyond.

She is not old, nor waxing cold,
But vigorous as of yore
Amid her kindred globes she rolled,
Exulting evermore.

Six thousand years of human strife
Are little in the sum ;
A morning added to her life,
And noonday yet to come.

Six thousand years !—what have *they* brought,
O poor ephemeral man ?
Go, reckon centuries by thought—
Thou 'lt find them but a span.

Go, reckon time by progress made—
And lo, what ages pass,
Swift as the transitory shade
Of clouds upon the grass.

Six thousand years ! and what are they ?

A cycle scarce begun—

A fragment of a grander day

Unmeasured by the sun ;

Too short to purify the sight

Of souls in Error blind—

Too short to show the healing light

Of Love to all mankind.

For, lo ! the lesson has been read

In every clime and tongue ;

The Sea has breathed it from her bed,

And Earth and Air have sung—

The Sun has beamed it from above

To all his worlds around ;

The Stars have preached that God was Love :—

What answer have we found ?

The generations, cold and dark,

Have lived and passed away,

And never caught the faintest spark

Of Love's eternal ray.

The myriads, seeking to create

An idol to adore,

Have made their God a God of Hate,

And worshipped him with gore.

And living multitudes have heard
That love is Nature's plan,
Yet shut their souls against the word
That teaches love to man.

But there is Progress in the spheres,
The glorious Earth is young ;
The seed has lain six thousand years,
The tender shoots have sprung.

She is not old, but young and fair,
And marching to her prime :
Her teeming bosom yet shall bear
The harvest of her time.

And generations—thought-endued—
Each wiser than the last,
Shall crowd, in one short year, the good
Of centuries of the past :

Shall, living, aid by loving deeds
The truths for which we pine,
And, dying, sow the fruitful seeds
Of progress more divine.

The struggle long and sorely fought—
Embittered as it spread—
For simplest rights—free hand, free thought,
And sustenance of bread :

The struggle of the righteous weak
Against th' unrighteous strong—
Of Justice firm, though mild and meek,
Against oppressive Wrong—

Draws in, and must be ended yet—
It ripens to its hour :
The mighty combatants have met ;
And Truth has challenged Power.

Young Earth !—her sad six thousand years
Now passing swift away,
Are but her infancy of tears—
The dawn before the day.

FREEDOM AND LAW.

WILDEST wind that shakes the blossoms,
Or on ocean chafes and swells,
Blows not uncontrolled and wanton,
But as LAW compels.

Streams that wander and meander,

Loitering in the meads to play,
Or that burst in roaring torrents
Into foam and spray ;

Avalanches, forest-crushing,

Fires that rage in Etna's breast,
Lava floods and tides of ocean,
All obey the same behest.

LAW releases, LAW restrains them :—

Lo ! the Moon, her forehead bent
Earthward, makes her revolution,

Docile, beauteous, and content ;

Lo ! the Earth her mighty mistress,

In her own appointed place,
Yields, like her, sublime obedience

To the LAW that governs space ;
And the godlike sun, exhaling

Light and Life from every pore,

On his axis, law-directed,
Wheels majestic evermore ;
Bearing with him to Orion
All the worlds that round him shine,
To complete the awful cycle
Of a destiny divine.
While the Stars and Constellations
Glowing in eternal light,
Teach the majesty of Order,
And that LAW is Infinite.

Is the immortal spirit freer,
Mated with its mortal clod ?
Lo ! it soars, and faith-supported,
Claims affinity with God ;
Proudly it disdains the shackles
Of the frame to which it clings,
And would fly to heights celestial,
On angelic wings :
But the hand of LAW restrains it ;
Narrow is the widest span,
Measured by the deeds or efforts
Of the aspiring soul of man.
Like the imprisoned lark, that carols
To salute the dawning day,
It can see the sky, and gather
Hope and rapture from its ray ;
It can see the waving branches
Of its long-lost happy bowers,

It can feel the heavenly breezes,
And the scent of meadow flowers ;
But if it would strive to reach them,
It is doomed to fruitless pain,
And with bleeding bosom struggles
At its prison-doors in vain.

If the mind be less entrammell'd,
And is freed from sensual bound ;
Still the LAW restrains and moulds it,
And attracts it to the ground :—
Like the young rejoicing Eaglet,
Knowing nought of gyves and bars,
It may imp its virgin pinions,
By a flight towards the stars ;—
High above the sterile Andes,
Or the Himalayan snow,
Breasting ether, robed in sunlight,
Unimpeded it may go,
But a Law has placed its limits,
And to pass them should it dare,
Numbness falls upon its pinions,
Death o'ercanopies the air.

Such thy fate, terrestrial spirit,
Such thy freedom ;—thou mayst soar
To the empyrean summits,
Where no mortal breathed before ;

But Infinitude surrounds thee ;
Nature stays thee in thy flight ;
Thou must turn thee, or be stricken
Powerless on thy topmost height.
Thou must travel lower, lower,—
Nearer to the earthly mould—
Safer for thee—there to fashion
New ideas out of old :
There to judge of the unfathom'd
By the things within thy ken,
Of the ways of God Eternal,
By the futile ways of men.

Yet, oh soul ! there's Freedom for thee ;
Thou mayst win it ;—not below ;—
Not on earth with mortal vesture,
Where to love, to feel, to know,
Is to suffer ; but unfetter'd,
Thou mayst spring to riper life,
Purified from Hate and Evil,
And Mortality and Strife.
Death is gaoler ; he 'll release thee ;
Through his portals thou shalt see
The Perfection that awaits thee,
If thou 'rt worthy to be free :—
Be thou meek, to exaltation—
Death shall give thee wings to soar ;
Loving God, and knowing all things,
Upwards springing evermore.

TRUTH AND ERROR.

GREAT is the power of Truth ; but greater far
The power of Error. Sum their victories up,
Count o'er their conquests since the earth began
To keep a record of its own misdeeds,
And balance them with virtues, we shall see
Which of the two is mightier conqueror
And fills the greater volume.—Easy task :
When every history tells the same sad tale,
And for one page of happiness and right,
Presents a thousand of despair and wrong.

Truth's victories are slow. Those who begin
The glorious battle in her dear behalf
Die off—despairing, some ; and hapless, all—
And leave the harsh inheritance of strife
To those who love them, and to times remote
The dearly-bought and tardy-paced success.
They sow, but reap not, nor their sons, nor grandsons ;
But strangers to them garner up their fruits,
Oft-times not knowing even the saintly names
Of those who struggled for a thankless world.

But Error's victories are sooner won.
Who fights for her, fights for an easy spoil,
With willing soldiers, valiant in the cause,
And gains the battle, oft without a scratch ;
For Error crowns her generals ere they die,
And blazons in men's ears with blatant voice
Their bloodiest deeds, until the foolish world
Exalts them—first to heroes, then to gods,
And swears for ever after by their names.

But blessings on the Truth, it prospers still.
And Error though it lives luxuriantly,
Lives fast, and grows decrepit, and expires,
To be succeeded by its progeny.
But Truth ne'er dies. Once let the seed be sown,
No blight can kill it : neither winds nor rain,
Nor lightnings, nor all wrath of elements,
Can e'er uproot it from the hungry soil.

Error has had her triumphs in the past :
Truth's are to come. In ages far remote
Her light was feeble as a glow-worm's lamp ;
But fed by noble thoughts and valiant deeds,
Fanned by the aspirations of the wise,
Tended by virtuous hearts with patient care,
'Mid cold, and darkness, and tempestuous wrong,
Rose higher, and glowed clearer, until now—
When, like a beacon on a mountain-top,
Seen of the nations, it illumines the world.

Truth was a snow-flake on a precipice
In the far-off cold summits of the past,
Which fell : and, falling, gathered strength and bulk
To fall again more heavily, and roll
Adown the slope of Time. 'Tis rolling now,
Huge as an avalanche ; and in the air,
The whizzing, and the roaring, and the crash
Of its great progress may be heard afar.

SOLITARY LOFTINESS.

I WOULD not be a Bird to wing my flight
High as the summit of the Himalays ;
I would not see the cold disrobèd sun
“ Shorn of his beams,” that permeate the world
And make it beautiful : but, with a scope
Of vision less remote, a power of flight
Less lofty, more divine, I would but soar
To those serene accessible mountain-tops
Where earth's pure atmosphere might hem me round,
And sunshine might be warmth and glory still.

TO IMPATIENT GENIUS.

PAINTER that with soul-creations
Wouldst attain th' applause of nations ;
And deserve a name of glory
To be writ in future story ;

Work thy way.

Live with Nature, love her truly,
Wisely, wholly :—and so duly

Bide thy day.

With high thoughts thy mind adorning,
Heed no critic's shallow scorning,

Nor at yelping curs repine :

Every light must cast a shadow,

So must thine.

Sculptor, with ambition glowing,
Steep thyself to overflowing

In the majesty and greatness,

Strength, and beauty, and sedateness

Of th' antique :

But forget not living Nature,
Heavenly in its form and feature,
For the Greek.
Beauty is renewed for ever :—
Let its love support endeavour,
Though neglect enwrap thee now—
Work :—and men will find a laurel
For thy brow.

Poet, singing in the earnest
Love and Hope with which thou burnest,
And upon a lofty summit
Sounding Nature, with the plummet
Of thy song :
Grieve not if thy voice be chidden,
And thy tuneful lustre hidden
Under wrong.
Scorn not Fame, but rise above it ;
Truth rewards the minds that love it ;
Like the planets shine and sing ;—
Noontide follows every morning,—
Summer, spring.

One and all, be up and doing ;
Glory needs incessant wooing ;
And if Faith—not mere ambition,
Prompts you to fulfil your mission,
You shall rise :

But the acorn, small and flower-like,
Must have time to flourish bower-like
To the skies.

Bide you yours :—of wealth not lustful ;
Ever patient, calm, and trustful :—

Years shall magnify your bole,
And produce immortal foliage
Of the soul.

UNA FATA MORGANA;

OR,

A VISION OF "WHAT MIGHT BE."

WEARY and sickening of the dull debate,
And clang of politics ; weary of hate
Toss'd at our heads from o'er the Atlantic main,
With foolish speeches ; weary of the pain
And sorrow, and calamity, and crime
Of daily history told us in our time ;
Weary of wrong that reared its hydra head,
And hiss'd from all its mouths ; dispirited
With rich man's apathy to poor men's hurt,
And poor men's ignorance of their own desert,
And for a moment hopeless of mankind
And that great cause, the nearest to my mind,
Progress—the dream of poet and of sage—
I lean'd back in my chair, and dropped the page
Diurnal, filled with all the misery,
And fell asleep ; if sleeping it could be,
When, in their natural sequence in the brain,
Thought followed thought, more palpable and plain

Than when I waked ; when words took music's voice,
And all my being inly did rejoice.
And what I saw, I sang of at the time,
With ease unparalleled by waking rhyme,
And to this tune, which, many a day, since then
A haunting music has come back again.

Oh the golden city,
Shining far away !—
With its domes and steeples tall
And the sunlight over all ;
With the waters of a bay
Rippling gently at its feet,
Dotted over with a fleet ;
Oh the golden city—so beautiful to see—
It shall open wide its portals,
And I'll tell you if it be
The city of the happy,
The city of the free.

Oh the glorious city,
Shining far away !—
In its boundaries every man
Makes his happiness a plan,
That he studies night and day,
Till he thinks it, not alone
Like his property, his own :

Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see—
But spreads it round about him,
Till all are blessed as he ;
His mind an inward sunshine,
And bright eternally.

Oh the splendid city,
Gleaming far away !—
Every man by Love possess'd,
Has a priest within his breast,
And, whene'er he kneels to pray,
Never breathes a thought unkind
Against men of other mind :
Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—
But knows that God Eternal
Will shower all blessings free,
On hearts that live to love Him,
And cling to Charity.

Oh the gorgeous city,
Shining far away !—
Where a Competence is bliss,
And each man that lives has this
For his labour of the day ;
A labour not too hard,
And a bountiful reward :
Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—

Where mighty wheels creative
Revolve incessantly,
And Science gains to cheer him,
A daily Victory.

Oh the glorious city,
Shining far away—
Neither Misery nor Crime,
Nor the wrongs of ancient Time,
Nor the Kingly lust of sway
Ever come within its wall,
To degrade or to enthral :
Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—
But Peace, and Love, and Knowledge,
The civilizing Three,
Still prove by GOOD that has been,
The BETTER that may be.

This dream'd I, to this rhythm, or something near,
But far more copious, musical, and clear ;
And when I wakened, still my fancy ran
'Twas not *all* dream ; and that large Hopes for man
Were not such idle visions as the wise,
In days like ours, should heedlessly despise :
I thought that Love might be Religion yet,
Not form alone, but soul and substance met ;
The guide, the light, the glory of the mind,
Th' electric link uniting all mankind ;

That if men loved, and made their Love the Law,
All else would follow :—more than ever saw
Poet or Prophet in the utmost light
Of heavenly glory opening on his sight.
But dream, or no dream, take it as it came :
It gave *me* Hope,—it may give *you* the same.
And as bright Hopes make the Intention strong,
Take heart with me, and muse upon my song.

THE ENGLISH PEEP-O'-DAY-BOYS.

Know ye not the Peep-o'-day-boys ?—

Bound, both heart and hand,
To do something worth the doing
For our English land ?—

Though no rebels and no traitors,
Yet a plot we 've laid :

English hearts, we pray you give it
Countenance and aid ;

And the watchword, if you 'll join us,
You shall learn anon :—

Hear it—learn it—think upon it :—

“ On—for ever on ! ”

Sanguine are the Peep-o'-day-boys :—

Solemn league we 've sworn,
That we 'll fight a strenuous battle
For each child that 's born ;

And maintain with growing fervour
Its inherent right,

Not to bread and raiment only,
But to mental light—

To the food of Education,
To be kept from none :—
Join the phalanx, shouting with us,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

And we hopeful Peep-o'-day-boys,
Shamed by Vice and Crime,
Think we'll manage to reform them :
Only give us time.
And as Ignorance is mother
Of the teeming brood,
We have vow'd to cease no effort
Till she is subdued :—
Sturdy war we'll make against her,
Till her strength is gone :—
Aid us ; and repeat the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

Other plots we Peep-o'-day-boys,
Hour by hour, advance ;
And such hatred have we taken
To Intemperance,
As the plague-spot of the people—
Poisoning brain and heart,
That we've sworn to struggle with it
On the People's part,

And already gain'd some triumphs
And a benison :—
Join our league ; and pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

Then we think the hangman's office
Ought not to endure :
Cruel quacks are not our Doctors—
Killing 's not our cure.
And 'tis portion of our compact,
Sworn with earnest faith,
That we 'll make a sinecurist
Of this man of death—
Both his trade and his example
Out of date are gone.
Aid the plot ; and pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

And we active Peep-o'-day-boys,
Busy as we are,
Still have time to pick a quarrel
With the demon War.
Many a plot we form to thwart him :—
And success though slow
Shall at last reward our efforts,
And we 'll smite him low—

Late or early we shall vanquish
This Apollyon :—
Join us—aid us—pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

Now you know the Peep-o'-day-boys ;
And they are not few :—
Over all the land you 'll find them
Zealous, firm, and true,
Never wearying in the struggle,
Lagging ne'er a jot :
Friend or foe, you 're pledged to join us,
Now you 're in the plot ;
You 're the master of our secret—
Power of choice is gone :—
Take the vows ; and pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

THE DEPOSITION OF KING CLOG.

KING CLOG was a mighty monarch,
He sat on his lofty seat,
With his golden crown,
And his ermine-down,
And his courtiers at his feet.
His power seemed firm as the mountains—
Inert but strong was he ;
And he ruled the land
With a heavy hand
And a placid tyranny.
And whenever a boon was asked him,
He stared with a calm amaze,
And said, “ Ye foolish people,
Ye must stand on the ancient ways.”

And long o'er the suffering nations,
King CLOG and his courtiers ruled,

And men half wise,
Who could use their eyes,
And were taught, and trained, and school'd,
Conceived this ponderous monarch
Was bountiful, wise, and good ;
And held it just
To kneel in the dust,
And smear him with gratitude.
And whenever the people murmured,
The king and his statesmen frown'd,
But stoutly refused to aid them ;
And so the world went round.

He was a drowsy monarch,
They were a drowsy crew,
And from hour to hour,
In their pride of power,
Duller and drowsier grew :
But a cry for reformation,
Which rose for evermore,
Disturbed their sleep
With its mutterings deep,
And stirr'd them to the core :
" We will not change," said the courtiers,
" For change is ever an ill,
We 'll crush these restless people,
If we cannot keep them still."

But CLOG, like all things mortal,
Declined as he grew old,
He loved to doze
In warm repose,
High on his throne of gold.
And the people saw his weakness,
And shouted in his ear,
“We’ve groaned too long,
In sorrow and wrong:
Awake ! let the right appear.”
And the king, with eyes half-opened
A lingering answer sent :—
“Let me alone, ye rabble—
And toil—and be content.”
“We’re weary of our bondage,”
Said they, “Oh, king, be just ;—
We delve and spin,
But cannot win
Our raiment and our crust ;
We ask no boon from favour,
That Justice should not give ;
From cradle to grave
We groan and slave,
And die that we may live.”
But CLOG replied, hard-hearted,
“Your sires were wise as you ;
They never complained ; poor wretches,
You know not what ye do.”

But still the people clamour'd,
And the cry o'er the nation spread—
 "Freedom of speech,
 Freedom to teach,
Freedom to earn our bread ;
These must we have, O monarch !
 Whether you will or no ;—
 Too long we 've pined,
 Body and mind,
 In ignorance and woe."
"Let me alone, I pray you,"
Said CLOG, "nor vex my soul ;
As the world has roll'd for ages,
 So must it ever roll."
And he folded his arms on his bosom,
And slept, and never heard
 The measured beat
 Of the trampling feet,
And the oft-repeated word
That came from the solemn conclave
Of the people, met to plan
 Some better laws
 To aid the cause
Of the happiness of man :
Nor the voices loud resounding
 Like waves upon the shore,
That proclaimed to the listening nations
 That CLOG should rule no more.

But JOG, the next successor,
Who understood his time,
Stepped on the throne :—
“ Father, begone—
To linger is a crime.
Go to thy bed and slumber,
And leave the world to me ;
Thy mission's done—
Thy race is run—
I 'm ruler of the free.”
So CLOG retired, obedient—
And JOG his son was crown'd.
We hope he 'll govern better :—
And so the world goes round.

THE CLAIRVOYANTE.

PART I.

THE INNER.

MASTER of my soul ! I hear thee,
And obey thee, as I must ;
And will look as thou commandest
Through the secrets of this dust,
Into spirit ; and lay bare
All I suffer, all I dare,
All the inner strength and weakness,
All the earthly and divine ;
All the baseness, all the grandeur,
Of this soaring soul of mine.
'Tis an effort I would shrink from
If permitted ; for the sum
Of my faults and imperfections
Is so great ; I would be dumb
On its greatness, and conceal
That which pains me to reveal.

Still it boots not ; and so inward
Turning these soul-eyes I look
O'er the blotted page of conscience,
And peruse it, like a book ;
Fair and clear, it might have glitter'd
Had I will'd to keep it pure ;
Had I learned to know its value,
And with patience to endure
All the suffering and wrong,
Sent to teach it to be strong.

In a robe of heavenly splendour,
Girt with glory, like a flame,
Germ itself of greater glory,
To this world my spirit came.
Mated for its good with Matter
As the seed is with the ground ;
Mated, but to tower superior,
And to spread its leaves around.
From the leaves to form the blossom,
From the blossom flowers and fruit :
But, alas ! by evil training,
It was blighted from the root.

Oh, my spirit ! self-degraded—
Flame unfed—imprison'd ray—
Germ prevented of thy vigour
By perverseness of the clay ;

Good was Infinite before thee ;
Knowledge, Happiness, and Power,
All were thine if thou hadst will'd them ;
And predestined for thy dower,
If thou hadst but seen the greatness,
That self-culture would have given :—
Spark earth-kindled, ever tending
To expand thyself in heaven—
But by Prejudice and Habit
Clogg'd and wearied in thy flight ;
Turned from radiancy of knowledge
Into dulness, dark as night.

Wretched Spirit ! sin betrammell'd,
Wretched, wretched, to have bent
Thy flame Nature from the circles
Of the upper element ;
And sunk downwards, basely grovelling,
Till thy sight grew weak and dim,
And thou couldst no longer listen
To the chaunt of Cherubim :
And of earth, most earthly essence,
Shrunk from the Eternal Presence,
Half extinguished in the mists,
By false reasoning dogmatists,
Who pretending they could teach,
Blighted thee with freezing speech.

Evil wert thou : evil art thou—
Fill'd with jealousies and spites,
Fill'd with malices and hatreds,
And with low and mean delights.
Girdled round with superstitions,
Contradictory and vile ;
Manacled and gyved in error,
And impermeate with guile.
God became a god of Hatred,
Goodness but a line effaced,
Light itself a lowering darkness,
Man a creature most debased :
And thyself, thyself degrading
To the level of thy thought,
Wert a weak and puling bigot
With dejection over-fraught,
'Till thou look'dst for consolation
To the paltry joys of clay,
Sacrificing all thy Future
To the meanness of To-day.

Yet, oh soul ! thou art immortal,
And hast glimpses fair and bright,
Of the heavenliness of duty,
And the mild undying beauty
That would girdle thee with light
If thou wouldst but cultivate
Love instead of Guile and Hate—

Love for God who made thee great—
Love and Knowledge ;—and for ever,
With sincereness of endeavour,
Cast away the misconceptions
Of false teachers of a faith
Dinn'd, and pray'd, and preach'd into thee,
Till thy life grew mental death.

Hast thou courage ? No, thou hast not,
Craven soul ! thou dar'st not think—
Thou 'rt afraid that Truth might guide thee
To a precipice's brink ;
Thou 'rt afraid to follow boldly
In the path thou hast begun ;
And thou fearest Doubt might lead thee
To convictions thou wouldst shun.
Paltry coward ! base, dishonest
Trifler with a holy thing !
Lov'st thou Truth, yet fear'st to seek it ?—
Poor designless wanderling !
Lov'st thou Truths ? and dost imagine
That one Truth can disagree,
Or misfit with Truth superior ?—
If thou dost, there 's none in thee :
Thou art filled with Guile and Falsehood—
Look around thee, Spirit mine ;
Cast away the bonds of Error ;
Mount and soar ; and be divine.

PART II.

THE OUTER.

TAKE, Oh take them from my sight—
All these people! Why should they
Stand between me and the light?
If thou wilt not, prithee lay
Gently on mine eyes thy fingers,
That, beyond them, touch'd by thee,
My rapt spirit, unencumber'd,
To the stars may journey free.

Wilt thou not? and must I look,
Through them, right into their souls?
Must I read, as from a book,
All their thoughts? No. Darkness rolls
O'er their spirits—o'er my own;
On my senses let it creep:
I am weary of their presence,—
Weary, weary,—let me sleep.
Must I waken?—Strong thy will is:
Unrepining I endure,
Yielding full obedience to thee,
Rich in that, however poor.

This man ? ay, his look is meek ;
Virtue seems to flush his cheek.

'Tis but seeming : well, what then ?
He is eaten up with pride ;
And the passion he can hide
From the scrutiny of men,
Would affright them if they saw it
Half as well as I can see :
Sanctity's a long loose garment
For the mind's deformity :
Well it hides—and snugly covers—
Many a folly, vice, and sin ;
And the heart that pulses calmly
May have black, black blood within.

This man too ?—so old and hoary,—
Creeping, crawling, cringing wretch !—
He would sell his father's bones,
By the pound, for what they'd fetch.
Slave to gold, for gold he'd barter
Anything but men's applause ;
That alone of value to him
For the custom that it draws.

This one ? she's a pleasant lady,
Rouged and powder'd with deceit ;
Foolish, though she looks so wise,
But in folly too discreet

To display the pilfer'd patchwork
Of her mind in all men's sight :
Heartless, witless, soulless cypher !—

But a somebody in right
Of the rents her husband left her
And her mild religious face,
And her punctual Sunday visits
To her pew in public place,
And the daily largess given
With a free unsparing hand,
If, to please the gentle donor,
It is blazon'd through the land.

Lo ! another ! He 's a teacher—
Messenger of God to men,
One that lifts his voice of thunder,
Till the rafters ring again ;—
Preaching peace with warlike meanings,
Humbleness with scorn innate,
Mercy while he thinks of vengeance,
Love while he is fill'd with Hate.
Holy teacher ! *I* can see him,
Know him, judge him, weigh him well,
For a hair's breadth of opinion
Sentencing the world to hell.
Quite convinced that in his sect
Is all Truth, and there alone :
And that all his people's truth,
Is but shadow of his own.

Let him learn his lesson better,
And have faith in humankind,
Charity, if he would lodge it,
Would not prey upon his mind :
Would not poison Gospel milk
With the gall his words instil,
Bad as earth is, good would flourish,
If we 'd grow it like the ill.

Who is next ?—ay—'tis the sage,
Great philosopher in seeming,
Wonder of a shallow age,
Ever jabbering and dreaming :
Full of cold hard facts and figures,
Soft to him as potter's clay,
Wherewithal to build a structure
For the uses of the day,
Poor philosopher ! to think
Man but made to eat and drink,
To be clothed and housed, and fed
And well buried when he 's dead.
He Philosopher ?—Ah, no !—

Wisdom dwells with higher things,
Than the mere material carcase,
And its common wires and springs ;
Far beyond his narrow vision
It is privileged to soar,
And while reconciled to reason
Must transcend it evermore.

This man, too, aspires to wisdom.—
He 's a legislator born,
A disciple in a science
Sprung of selfishness and scorn ;
That considers Earth too scanty,
For its people ; and would treat,
Every poor man as a foe-man,
If the wretch made bold to eat—
Vilest culprit, if he married,
Till his corn and wine were sure,—
Life itself a shameful error
In the children of the poor.
Selfish bigot, look around thee,
Nor with fallacy so blind
Cast a blight upon the spirits
Of the mothers of mankind.
Half the surplus, thou possessest,
After all thy needs are fed,
Would supply a score of mortals
Better than thyself with bread.
Earth is wide enough for all men
If division were but fair :
Heartless, shallow, greedy sophist,
Be contented with thy share.
Blame not Heaven for man's misdoing,
Nor with theories so sad
Deem the laws of genial Nature
Bad, because thy heart is bad.

Take these people from my presence,—
Let me see beyond—beyond !
Or, if not, oh let me slumber,
And not waken to despond !—
Thy commandment weighs upon me—
I am docile, and obey ;
But, when this is done, oh lead me—
Lead me to a brighter way !

Who are these that crowd around me ?
Ears of corn and blades of grass,
To and fro for ever swaying
As the light winds o'er them pass,
Are not more alike than these are—
One might form the mould for all.
They have minds, but scarcely know it ;
Their opinions rise or fall
As the breath of others blows them :
Christians they by chance of birth,
Neither very good nor evil—
Clods of animated earth :
Souls ? ay, they have souls—but small ones—
Small as germs—like germs to spring,
If there were a soil to feed on
And a sunshine ripening ;
But, alas for them ! they 've fallen
On Convention's barren mound,
Tended by such cultivation
As but rots them in the ground :

Types of countless generations
That have lived since earth began,
And have died without an effort
To increase the good of man,—
Heedless that the proper mission
Of each race upon the soil
Is to make the next a better,
By its wisdom and its toil ;—
Living, like inferior creatures,
But to propagate their kind,—
Sinking into death, nor leaving
Name, or fame, or thought behind.

Hast thou then released my spirit
From this thralldom ?—Let me go !
I will seek a fairer presence,
Far from human shame and woe :
Living in a shining trance,
Careless of deliverance :
Knowing and commingling well
With the indestructible
Spirit-life that hems me in,
Purifying me from sin.

PART III.

THE INFINITE PROGRESSION.

BACK to dawn of first remembrance ?

Long and darksome is the way :

Powerful master of my spirit,

Tell me how shall I obey ?

I am weak, and faint, and freezing,

Crawling on the ground in pain :

Weary—weary,

Dark and dreary :

With a weight upon my brain.

Hard and icy is the region,

And my blood is thin and slow :

I am living—I am dying—

Both in one, and both in woe.

I am fetter'd, limb by limb,

To a planet dull and dim—

To an orb of darkness dread,

Where to live is to be dead

To the Love, the Joy, the Light :—

Let me leave it ; let me quite

Burst my fetters ; let me soar

Nearer—nearer—evermore

Nearer to the glorious sun :—
Mount, my spirit ! we 've begun
Flight most long ; but what is Time
 To the Infinite, like thee,
Destined as thou art to climb
 Upwards to Eternity ?

Oh the sorrow ! where is this ?—
 To what prison have I come—
Cheerless, soundless, colourless,
 Hard and frozen, blank and dumb ?—
I am fetter'd to a body
 Galling to me ; and my blood,
If not stagnant altogether,
 Is a cold and sluggish flood.
All is dim before mine eyes ;
 And I fancy it would be
Sweet to close them, and to sleep,
In a slumber still and deep,
 Senseless to eternity.
Let me slumber—let me rest—
 God hath given me the desire :
And He surely knoweth best ;
 Let me sleep, my life's a fire
Faintly burning ; feed it not,—
 In this world where hope is vain,
Where the sun is but a spot,
 And existence but a pain.

Were it not that these sweet moons,
Seven fair creatures in the sky,
And those rings so coldly bright,
Cheer'd me with a glimpse of light,
I would lay me down and die.
No more crawling, life oppress'd ;
I am weary, let me rest.

Praises ! Praises ! mightiest Praises !

What a weight has fallen away !

I am soaring !

And adoring !

And emerging into day !

But a numbness still enwraps me,

Though I see th' eternal sun.

Struggle, spirit !—struggle onwards !

Thy expansion has begun !

Thou canst see the glories round thee :

Thou canst turn thy thoughts above ;

Thou canst praise the God who made thee ;

Thou canst serve him with thy love.

Chill and gloomy as thou art,

Thou art warming in the ray ;

And though slow,

And full of woe,

Thou thy destined path must go,

Till thou shinest in the day.

Though thy sight is somewhat dull,

And thy life but sorrowful,

And thy years—long, painful years,
Thou art rising in the spheres ;
And canst worship and enjoy :

Lo ! the heavens are fair to view,
And the mountains, snow-envelop'd
Glitter, beautiful and blue,
With their sharp and jagged peaks,
High as if they meant to rise
To those two transcendant moons
Of the four that cheer the skies.
Patience ! Patience ! toiling spirit !

Thou art creature of a law ;—
Reconcile thee to thy prison,
Death, thy dungeon-gate shall draw
Wide, wide open : wait thy time :—
Every germ must feel the clod,
Darkness, cold and wet and storm :
Ere it sprout beyond the sod.
Thou hast pierced above the gloom ;
Feed thyself with sun and air ;
Germ and Leaf, and Bud and Bloom,
All are destined to thy share.

Weary, weary,
Dark and dreary,
I have linger'd sadly here,
Wearing out this mortal frame,
With the incessant toil that came,
Daily, from dull year to year.

But I die. I feel the spirit
Mounting, mounting, mounting still ;
Brighter visions burst upon me,
Joy with grief and good with ill.
Life is fuller—sight is clearer,
I am coming ever nearer
To the knowledge that I crave ;
Hail ! new planet ! still a prison
Girt and guarded by a grave :
But I know what lies before me—
Germ and leaf : your time is o'er,
Through those phases of existence,
I shall vegetate no more.
Here in sunlight—grown in stature—
In a world of light and life,
I awake to higher effort,
Warmer motion, fiercer strife.
Feeling still, the more I know,
Greater thirst, intenser woe,
That my knowledge is so small,
That I cannot fathom all.

Where have I been ?—my thoughts have wander'd—
Back through dim chaotic years ;
Methought I was in other worlds,
Journeying through the starry spheres.
And am I in the earth again ?
Take me firmly by the hand—

Press it :—touch me on the brow ;
Let me fully understand
I am here.—Ah, well I know,
It is called a world of woe :—
There are worse, could we remember
All that we have seen and done
In our progress from the outer
Utter coldness to the sun.

But again my senses swim,
And again my sight grows dim ;
And I seem to maze and whirl,
Like a leaflet in the vortex,
Where the fierce tornadoes curl.
All within grows calm and bright—
I am diaphanous with light,
And I see through every pore :
Earth beneath me seems to drop
Ocean, steppe, and mountain-top,
Far into the darkening space ;
And I soar—I soar—I soar
To a brighter dwelling-place,
Seeing, knowing, loving more.
Oh the glory opening on me !
Oh the fulness of the light !
Oh the love, th' eternal rapture !—
Shut it—shut it from my sight.
Tongue, be silent ! and thou, spirit,
Worship in the Infinite !

Preparing for Publication.

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OR,

LOVE AND IMMORTALITY.

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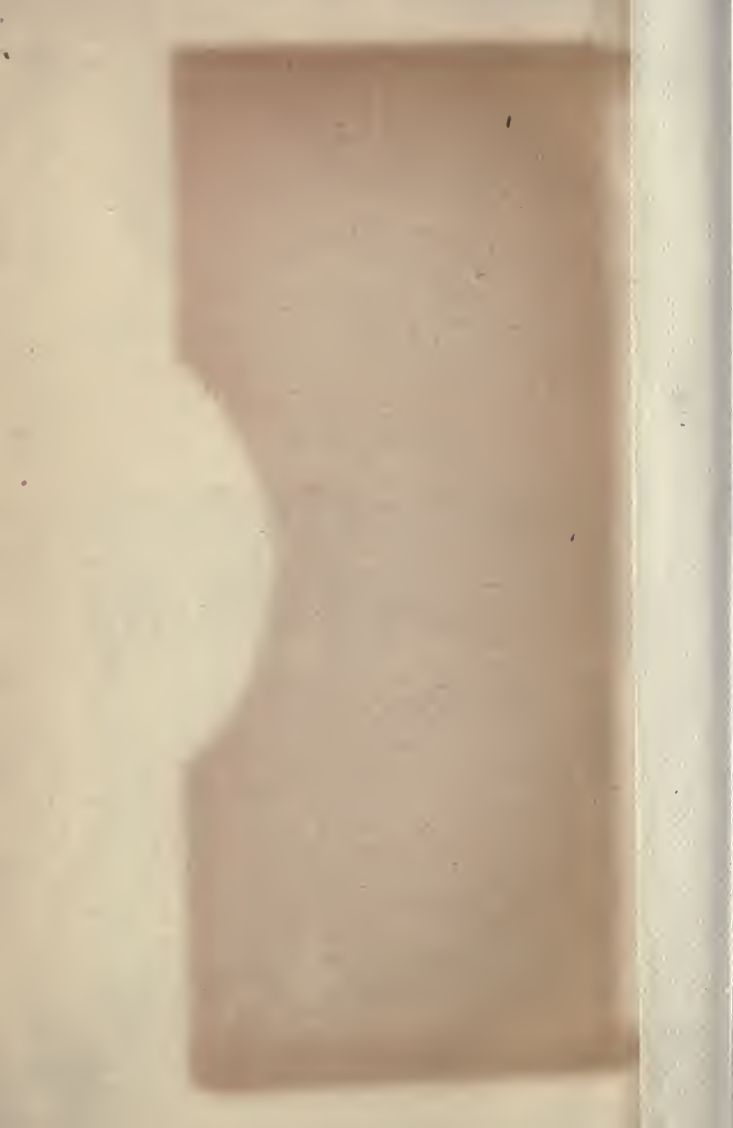
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